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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Global Economy

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas is expected to demand U.S. intervention in halting Israeli construction and dismantling illegal outposts in the West Bank when he meets President Bush Thursday at the White House. The newspaper cited the hope of Israeli officials that the meeting will boost Abbas's status in the PA, and that he will be welcomed in a very positive light. Ha'aretz also cited the belief of Israeli officials that the meeting will not produce any surprises that could weaken Jerusalem's position in future talks. The newspaper details the differences between the U.S. and Israel on issues to be discussed at the Bush-Abbas talks: the participation of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections; supplying weapons and ammunition to the Palestinians; and measures to ease the lives of the Palestinians. Jerusalem Post reported that a source in the Prime Minister's Office told the newspaper that Israel expects President Bush to take a firm stand against terrorism when he meets with Abbas. Jerusalem Post reported that on the eve of Abbas's visit to Washington, the PA announced that it has no intention of disarming Hamas or other armed groups.

All media (lead story in Hatzofe) quoted State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack as saying Monday, "We would ask the Israeli Government and we have asked the Israeli Government, as you know, in the past, to take steps to ease the daily plight of the Palestinian people." The statement came in the wake of travel restrictions imposed on the Palestinians by the IDF following Sunday's terrorist attacks in the West Bank. The media quoted McCormack as saying, "We would hope that all sides take into account the potential ramifications of whatever steps that they do take and keep their eye on the ultimate objective which we all know and all sides share of two states living together side by side in peace and security." According to Yediot, the U.S. expects Israel not to respond to "small" terrorist attacks. Jerusalem Post quoted Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mark Regev as saying: "In Israel, we have no desire to a return of daily attacks against Israeli civilians. We want to send a very strong and sharp message to the Palestinians, and the temporary suspension of talks is that message."

Maariv and Israel Radio reported that the IDF's Central Command is expanding its plan to build separate roads for Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank, in order to achieve a complete separation between the two populations in the territories.

Leading media reported that at their meeting in Paris

on Tuesday, Abbas and Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora denounced the flow of illegal weapons and terror groups into Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Jerusalem Post reported that over 240 Fatah activists in the Gaza Strip resigned on Tuesday "in a move that is likely to deepen division in Abbas's ruling party."

Major media cited a story in the German weekly Der Stern, according to which the UN team investigating the assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafiq Hariri has found that Syrian President Bashar Assad's brother-in-law and Syrian intelligence chief Gen. Assef Shawkat is the main suspect in the murder. Israel Radio also reported that today, UN envoy to Lebanon Terje Roed-Larsen will present to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan a report about Syria's continued involvement in Lebanon.

Ha'aretz reported that NATO and Israel agreed in principle to post a senior IDF navy intelligence officer permanently at the military alliance's southern headquarters in Naples. The deal is yet to be approved by the GOI.

Maariv reported that Noam Chomsky, the Jewish American linguistics expert and critic of U.S. and Israeli foreign policy, was named the world's top public intellectual, according to a poll released on Tuesday by the British magazine Prospect/Foreign Policy.

Ha'aretz, Maariv, and Israel Radio reported that Shmuel Levy, an Israeli diamond merchant who is also an AmCit, disappeared after traveling to Athens on business more than a week ago. Levy entered Greece on his U.S. passport. Ha'aretz reported that the Greek police believe that the motive behind his disappearance could be either nationalist or criminal, and that they are investigating all possibilities. Ha'aretz wrote that the U.S. Embassy in Athens is also taking action to find the missing man.

Yediot reported that the annual Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, a global NGO devoted to combating corruption, which was made public on Tuesday, ranked Israel in the 28th place among 159 countries, with a grade of 6.3 (10 being "highly clean" and 0 "highly corrupt"). Yediot notes that Israel ranked 18th on the list in 2002, with a 7.3 grade.

All media reported on, and Yediot bannered, former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's trial, which is due to start today in Baghdad.

Maariv cited a Washington Post story, according to which the Israeli company Foxcom is suspected of involvement in a corruption scandal in Washington. According to The Washington Post, Foxcom paid USD 280,000 to the Jewish American lobbyist Jack Abramoff in order to install antennae on the roof of the U.S. Congress.

All media reported that the first case of avian influenza was reported in Greece, and raised the possibility that the pandemic could reach Israel.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Israel ... is obligated to use an appropriate degree of caution fighting terrorism. Such an attitude is guided not by vengeance for a terrible terrorist attack, but rather by the need to build a powerful Palestinian partner that will be capable of replacing Israel in this war."

Veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Arik Sharon handed [the Palestinians] a gift on a golden platter, and they spit (fire) at him."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Abbas should be told, simply, that if he doesn't take real action, he will not be propped up. This is a critical test of America's resolve to defeat terrorists -- not just some terrorists, but all terrorists."

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized: "If the U.S. administration does not care for the Israeli norms, perhaps we should adopt their norms."

Block Quotes:

I. "A Partner in the War on Terror"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (October 19): "In the absence of magical solutions to eliminate terrorism, the Defense Minister has elected to reinstate harsh measures that were in practice during the worst days of the Intifada, such as barring Palestinians from driving on main roads in private vehicles.... These measures rely on the assumption that there is nobody reliable on the Palestinian side, and that apparently also will be the assessment Abbas hears in his upcoming meeting with the President of the U.S.... Abbas's difficulties in thwarting all attacks while the occupation remains in effect throughout the West Bank do not call for Israel's forgiving attitude toward terrorists, but do demand viewing Abbas as a worthy partner in the anti-terror campaign: a partner who appears to be willing to adopt the old adage that you should fight terrorism as if there were no peace process, and advance the peace process as though there were no terrorism. Israel, which drew optimism from the political developments in the territories in recent months, therefore is obligated to use an appropriate degree of caution fighting terrorism. Such an attitude is guided not by vengeance for a terrible terrorist attack, but rather by the need to build a powerful Palestinian partner that will be capable of replacing Israel in this war."

II. "What a Messed Up People (the Palestinians)"

Veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (October 19): "Beyond the tragedy of the Etzion Bloc, the problem of our terrible neighbors, whom we did not choose, once again faces us. After 100 years of terror and blood, the Palestinians are still missing every opportunity to establish a state, and appear as a collection of gangs with no law and no judge, where every gun holder is a prime minister and a Supreme Court justice in his own right. A band of corrupt officials and money gatherers, and what should be their government and authority looks more like a circus performance in a madhouse. One cannot help but mull over their bitter fate: what a messed up people. How is it that they did not succeed in producing a leader -- one, just one -- who would take them out of darkness into the great light. Arik Sharon handed them a gift on a golden platter, and they spit (fire) at him."

III. "No More Excuses"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (October 19): "Once Israel's guard is lowered, more carnage can only be expected. The only surprising aspect about Sunday's slaughter was that it didn't occur earlier. The PA claims, without substantiation, to have foiled 17 terror plots. But there have been numerous attempts, which Israel fortunately managed to preempt via operations that only earned it vehement PA condemnation and international rebuke. However, with a number of roadblocks abandoned and Palestinian traffic unhindered, it was only a matter of time that luck would run out.... Just as it is naive to believe that groups like Hamas can be talked into disarming, it is naive to expect Abbas to do more than talk unless he is forced to do so. More lives, both Israeli and Palestinian, will continue to be lost until Abbas has no choice but to take the admittedly difficult steps he has been avoiding to date. The United States and Europe, by threatening to withhold their financial assistance, have the power to insist that the old excuses are no longer acceptable. Abbas should be told, simply, that if he doesn't take real action, he will not be propped up. This is a critical test of America's resolve to defeat terrorists -- not just some terrorists, but all terrorists."

IV. "With Thanks to the United States"

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized (October 19): "The U.S. administration issued a statement that contains implicit criticism of the restrictions imposed on Palestinian movement on the roads of Judea, Samaria and Gaza [i.e. the territories], or more precisely [criticism] of the policy that separates Jewish traffic from Palestinian traffic. Restrictions on Jewish movement in Judea, Samaria and Gaza have existed for years, and are considered obvious.... It is good that the US administration behaved this way, for perhaps Israel should adopt the American norms in this area,

for example [those in force] in Iraq and Afghanistan. In these countries, [soldiers manning] the American roadblocks shoot every day, usually to death, innocent civilians who approach the roadblocks. This U.S. policy does not exist only in regions of tension. For example, when demonstrations were held recently in the Philippines against the American presence, the Americans announced in advance that at certain points, demonstrators who approach the fences of the bases would encounter live fire. They indeed approached, and indeed encountered. Therefore, if the U.S. administration does not care for the Israeli norms, perhaps we should adopt their norms."

12. Global Economy:

Summary:

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Will the Americans be forever able to eat other people's savings? Of course they won't."

Block Quotes:

"It's the Economy, Stupid"

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (October 19): "Contrary to everything that has ever been taught about development economy, poor China has become the rich United States' greatest financial provider.... The U.S. economy has never been as dependent upon the good will of the senior officials of the Chinese Communist Party and the [Persian Gulf] emirates.... If the Chinese change their ways and decide to buy dollars, not even God and his representative on earth -- Alan Greenspan -- will be able to save the dollar from a debacle.... Will the Americans be forever able to eat other people's savings? Of course they won't. The inevitable adaptation will happen. The standard of living in the U.S. will have to decline. This means tightening belts ... cuts, and social and economic crying."

JONES